

The Tripp House  
Forty-Fort, Pennsylvania

H.A.B.S. No. Pa. 236

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*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Thomas H. Atherton, District Officer  
306 Dime Bank Bldg., Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

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40-8000

THE TRIPP HOUSE  
Forty-Fort, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

<u>Owner</u>	Mrs. Gordon L. Boote and Miss Marjorie Thompson.
<u>Date of Erection</u>	Approximately, 1832.
<u>Builder</u>	David Corey.
<u>Present Condition</u>	Excellent. Very little departure from original state. Rear portion has been somewhat remodelled. New floors, in some portions of the house. Sun porch has been enclosed and remodelled. Some of the fireplaces have been modernized.
<u>Number of Stories</u>	Two floors and attic.
<u>Materials of Construction</u>	Stone foundations. Exterior walls, frame and siding; interior walls, lath and plaster. Roof is wood shingles.

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Isaac Tripp, a farmer, was born in Providence, Pennsylvania, September 1817; the seventh in a family of eleven children of Isaac and Catherine Tripp, natives of Pennsylvania and of English-Quaker and Scotch and French origin, respectively. He is a grandson of Isaac and Martha Tripp and a great grandson of Isaac Tripp, who came from Rhode Island to the Wyoming Valley, who was one of the "first forty" settlers and represented Westmoreland County in the Connecticut General Assembly in May, 1777, to aid in settling disputed land titles. He was a great friend of the Indians, by whom he was painted, somewhat according to their custom, but when called to Connecticut, he washed off the stripes given him by the Red man, and after his return, while foddering cattle one morning at daybreak, with his son-in-law Jonathan Slocum, both were fallen upon by the savages and slain before reaching the enclosure. This was on December 16, 1778. He was the grandfather of Frances Slocum who was kidnapped by the Indians. Jonathan Slocum, father of Frances, was married to Ruth Tripp in 1757.

Early in 1778, Jonathan Slocum, his wife and nine children emigrated from Rhode Island to Wyoming Valley. The winter of 1778 was a troublous one in the Valley. Gathering hordes of the Six Nations were already being mustered with John Butler's Rangers for a descent down the Susquehanna. Jonathan Slocum was a Quaker and fancied that his convictions would be respected, even by the savages. The Indians, for a time, were very friendly, as they were to Isaac Tripp. Slocum's oldest son Giles, however, took part in the bloody conflict of July 3, 1778 and the Indians, always revengeful, concluded the Slocums were deceiving them and determined to seek revenge. On Monday morning, November 2, 1778, a sharp crack of a rifle notified Mrs. Slocum that the Indians were near. She opened the door and discovered the lifeless body of Nathan Kingsley, a neighbor boy, on the ground before her. Mrs. Slocum bolted the door, snatched her seven weeks old baby, rushed out the back door and hid her child in the swamp. The younger Kingsley boy and little Frances Slocum hid themselves in a closet under the stairs. The other children escaped, with the exception of Ebenezer, a lame boy of thirteen. The Indian who had slain the Kingsley boy was joined by two others and the three proceeded to ransack the house. Frances, Ebenezer and young Kingsley were discovered, dragged from their concealment and made prisoners. The mother pleaded that the lame boy would do them no good; they contemptuously shoved him over to her. The foremost savage slung the little girl Frances, over his

shoulder while his companion did likewise with the Kingsley boy and they stalked off through the woods, heedless of the Mother's frantic pleas. It was the last glimpse she ever had of her little daughter.

Searching parties and soldiers went out immediately, but returned, day after day, with no success. The Kingsley boy obtained his freedom, after some years, and returned to his home but the fate of the stolen girl might have remained one of the unsolved mysteries of the frontier, had it not been for a succession of events, unfolding in their sequence, one of the most amazing dramas in all the annals of pioneer warfare.

It was sixty years later when relatives, who remembered her as a happy, laughing child, were to see her again. The wilderness had made her its own; had stolen away her language, and for the customs and habits of civilization, had substituted those of the Indians. It was a haggard, shriveled Indian squaw who was recovered. The search began again in 1784 and many weary trips were made by the mother and brothers of the lost little girl. In 1794, Mrs. Slocum died, still convinced that her daughter lived, and a request that the search go on.

In 1835, the first real information concerning Frances was obtained. Col. George Ewing, who conducted a trading post at Logansport, Indiana, was forced to stop for shelter at a native settlement called Deaf Man's Village. At the lodge of Mac-On-A-Quah, an old Indian woman, whose husband before his death, had been chief of the settlement, gave him lodging. After the meal had been completed, the old woman began to speak in the Indian language. She said "I have not long to live, and I have a secret which I do not wish to die with me. You think I am an Indian, but my blood is as white as yours. I was stolen from my home when I was a child----how many years ago, it is impossible for me to say." Colonel Ewing gathered more facts and as many of the details as was possible from her, and was convinced that he had stumbled upon something of great importance. Knowing no one in Pennsylvania, he addressed a letter to the postmaster at Lancaster, Pa. Although the letter reached its destination, it was tossed aside and was not discovered until two years later when it was published in the Lancaster Intelligencer. One of the subscribers was the Rev. Samuel Bowman who had spent his early life in Wilkes-Barre and had often heard the story of Frances Slocum. The next post carried a copy of the paper to Joseph Slocum in Wilkes-Barre. Immediately a letter was sent to Col. Ewing, imploring him for more details. A reply came back promptly. Col. Ewing was certain that the Indian woman, who still lived, corresponded to the descriptions of Frances Slocum. A month later, the two Slocum brothers, William and Isaac, arrived in Indiana where they were joined by Col. Ewing. They immediately went to the lodge and were able to identify her by a disfigured finger on her left hand. She received them with great coldness and indifference.

One of the brothers exclaimed, "My God! This can't be our sister." The final proof came, when having heard her name which she had forgotten, a smile spread over her wrinkled face and she murmured over and over, "Franca, Franca".

She finally told her story: That she had been abducted by members of the Delaware tribe and carried to Fort Niagara. Here, she was adopted by an old warrior and his wife who gave her the name "We-Let-A-Wash". She was in her early twenties when she made her first marriage to a young Indian chief by whom she had several children. After his death, she was married again, to another Indian who took her to the Settlement where she was finally discovered. She refused to return, even to visit the home of her childhood because she had forgotten all the habits of civilization and would not be happy among her own people.

Thus did Frances Slocum, reared of white parents, choose to spend the remainder of her days among the people and scenes of an alien race who had weaned her away from her own. Her Indian husband was dead but her Indian children lived about her and ministered to her simple wants. On two occasions, her relatives came to see her. The Rev. George R. Slocum, nephew of Frances Slocum, went with his family to the Reserve to spend some time. He worked for many years among the Indians and succeeded in converting many of them.

The death of Frances Slocum occurred on March 8, 1847 and she insisted that even in death, she should not be taken from her adopted people. In the little Indian graveyard, near Reserve, Indiana, she was laid to rest, where in 1900, a handsome monument was erected to her memory. Six years later, two bronze tablets were placed in the city of Wilkes-Barre by Slocum descendants to recall the drama of the "Little Lost Sister of Wyoming Valley" who had been found too late to go back to her own people. On Saturday, May 28, 1938, the Society of Frances Slocum branch, of the Children of the American Revolution will conduct a tree-planting ceremony at the Town Hall of the Borough of Forty-Fort.

Isaac Tripp, our subject, was a second cousin to Frances Slocum and the Slocum name has become synonymous with that of Tripp. Tripp located in Kingston in 1854. His first wife died November, 1856 and Mr. Tripp married Hannah Rogers in 1861. He died in 1898 at the age of eighty years.

Abiel Abbott who purchased the house from the original owner in 1834, came here from Mauch Chunk, where he was superintendent of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company. The following is taken from "The Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal" of Wednesday, October 31, 1838, Vol. 2, No. 7 under the heading

"Deaths". "At his residence in Kingston Township, on the 2nd. inst. Mr. Abiel Abbott in the 43th year of his age. To almost every individual, in Eastern Pennsylvania, has the name of Mr. Abbott been for years past familiar. As the superintendent of the extensive works and improvements of the Mauch Chunk Company, his character for enterprise, industry, foresight, and skill, had gained a merited eminence among his fellow citizens. His death at an age but little advanced beyond the prime of life, is a public loss, almost as great as it is a private bereavement to his family and large circle of relatives and acquaintances whose happiness and comfort appeared to be the great aim of his life."

Upon the death of Mr. Abbott, members of his family continued to live in the house which was then known as "Abbott Farm" until 1859 when it was sold to Isaac Tripp. By checking deeds at the Court House, it was discovered that the property originally belonged to Elisha Atherton, Senior, bought by him from the Committee of the Township of Kingston. Three acres belonged originally to Phillip Jackson. Upon the death of Elisha Atherton, Sr., the property was bought by his son, Elisha Atherton, Jr., and on the same day was transferred to David Corey. This was in January, 1832. The house apparently was built by David Corey sometime during 1832 or 1833. Abiel Abbott bought the property and home from the Estate of David Corey through his administrators, Nathen Patterson and Elisha Atherton, Jr., on April 26, 1834. The house and lands were finally sold by Abbott heirs to Isaac Tripp, 17th October, 1859 for \$15,000.00, property containing 106 acres.

The house is now occupied by the grand-daughters of Isaac Tripp, Miss Marjorie Thompson and Mrs. Gordon L. Boote, her husband and children. It is also used by them, as a home for tourists.

While general lines of the building remain unchanged, the rear portion has been remodelled by Mr. Tripp. What was formerly a store and work room is the present kitchen. The present rear sitting-room was originally the kitchen. The barn, privy and tool house are probably later additions.

The house is of frame construction; exterior finish, siding; interior, plaster. There is a porch on the front and south west side. There are ornamental wood porch posts supporting the roof. Roof is wood shingles. The front entrance is Colonial in design and has two fluted columns with decorated caps on either side. The trim at top of Ionic columns protrudes about three or four inches. There are five oblong shaped, decorated glass panels across top and two glass panels on either side of door. Door is panelled. The main hall is wide with modern parquet floors laid over original floor. There is a solid wood, archway approximate center of hall, with fluted columns and decorated caps. The stairway leading from main hall to second floor is not original.

Doors to left of hall leading to parlor and living room are Colonial in design with fancy casings, decorated corner blocks and paneled jambs. In front parlor are two full length French windows having frame casings with decorated corner blocks. The fireplace is open with modern Baltimore heater in recess. Mantel is slate, simulating marble. There is a very wide doorway with modern sliding doors between living room and parlor. Originally, there were two doors here. There is a fancy hearstone in center of the casing. Mantel and fireplace similar to one in parlor. Two full length doors with panelling at bottom and long glass windows lead to modern sun porch. This is not an addition. It formerly formed part of the original porch. A door leads to dining room and another door leads to small bedroom. The ceiling in dining room is lower than in the other two rooms. The dining room was originally the rear living room. There are two regular size windows facing rear. There is a small fireplace with plain wood mantel and framing and marble hearth. Here too, a burner has been installed.

From the dining room is a door to small bedroom with one window facing south west and a fireplace with mantel and framing similar to one in dining room. This is now covered by a removable screen. Doors from hall, dining room and side porch lead to rear sitting room. Originally, this was used as the kitchen. The fireplace here has been torn out and a modern mantel has been placed. Door from here leads to modern kitchen originally used work and storage room. Door leads to enclosed porch in rear. Door leads to closed stairway to cellar. From main hall, there is a closed back stairway to second floor. Door has the original hardware.

At first landing on main front stairway, there is a very high window. On second floor is a wide hall. Door at top of stairs to the left leads to large bed room with two windows paneled at the bottom. Fireplace is open and shielded. Mantel is wood, decorated framing, marble hearth. All doors on second floor are wide and paneled with wide, plain center panels. Four steps lead from this bed room to rear portion of floor which is lower than the front section. Here a door leads to modern bath. Over doorway is a small cupboard with old wooden latch. Another door leads to small bed room. One window faces rear and a small window high in wall faces south west. From this bedroom is a door leading to a very narrow rear hall. On far side is another larger bedroom directly at top of back stairway. One window faces front and two face northwest. There is an open fireplace with removable screen. The wood mantel and framing is simple in design. There is a three-cornered cupboard in wall with old wooden latch.

In front part of second floor, off the main hall is another larger bed room with two windows facing front and open fireplace with removable screen. The mantel is wood, simple in design. There are columns on either side of framing.

an ornamental rosette in the center and a marble hearth.

Another door off the main hall leads to small bed room with one window. Door at end of hall leads to closed stairway to third floor. The original hardware remains. All doors on second floor have raised floor sills.

Historical Information and References obtained from the following:

"History of Luzerne County" edited by: H.C. Bradsby in 1893., Miner's "History of Wyoming"; "The Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys" under editorial supervision of Rev. Horace Hayden, Hon. Alfred Hand, John W. Jordan., "Frances Slocum" by her Grandniece, Martha Bennett Phelps; "Pioneer Tales of Wyoming Valley" by McNeilis; Court House, Recorder of Deeds office, Vols. 29, Pg. 720., Vol. 23, Pg. 597; Vol. 28, Pg. 330; Vol. 174, Pg. 525; Vol. 81, Pg. 172; Mrs. Gordon L. Boote, grand-daughter of Isaac Tripp; Mr. Abbot, grand-son of Abiel Abbott; Historical Society- "Republican Farmer and Democratic Journal" 1838.

Author.....

Approved.....

Date.....

*Betty Tolson*  
*Thomas H. Atterton*  
*May 25, 1938*